



Hints to the New Association Duke of Grafton  
Expediency of Revising the Liturgy { Bp. of Lan  
Letter to Bp. of Norwich Watson

SCC #10,940

Grafton, Augustus Henry  
Fitzroy, 1735-1811.

Hints, &c. submitted to the  
serious attention of the

Merrick

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Merrick



H I N T S, &c.

TO THE

*NEW* ASSOCIATION.



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Submitted to the serious Attention of the

CLERGY, NOBILITY AND GENTRY,  
*NEWLY* ASSOCIATED,

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A L A Y M A N,

A FRIEND TO THE *TRUE* PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTI-  
TUTION, IN CHURCH AND STATE, AND TO  
RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

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The SECOND EDITION, revised, with Additions.

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*Dum imperare discimus ; parere prudenti in animum  
inducamus.*

LIVIOUS.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for B. WHITE and SON, at Horace's Head,  
Fleet Street, and J. DEBRET, Piccadilly.

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

A Public Affliction affecting all orders of People (but now most happily removed) caused the first Edition of this Pamphlet to be called in, when few Copies had been sold ; for, such a Publication would *then* have been ill-timed. As the alterations are considerable in this Second, any one possessed of the first Edition may have this in Exchange, by bringing the former to the Bookfeller.



# H I N T S, &c.

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**I**F the present design was to point out any particular precepts of morality, the author of the following sheets would, at once, have dropped the pen, as one insufficient and unfit for an undertaking which can come, with propriety, from those persons only, whose piety and virtuous conduct, through the course of a well-spent life, entitle them to enforce their doctrine, by the weighty credit of example: but, in attempting to bring circumstances, in which every one is deeply interested, whether considered in a religious, or in a political light, under the consideration of the public, he need not, on this head, trouble his readers with an apology; though he is sensible that, in treating these

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matters,

matters, he will be under the necessity of having constant recourse to their kind indulgence on so many occasions, that he will beg leave to rest his plea entirely on the principle which actuates him, anxiously desirous as he is, to contribute his mite, in order to forward a measure, which, though long expected, was never so peculiarly requisite as at the present time; and which would, in his opinion, be a source from whence might be derived the best comforts and blessings to society, together with great national honor, credit, and advantage.

The objects aimed at in these pages are plainly these: to shew, in as few words as possible,

That the worst of consequences are to be dreaded for the community, if a speedy stop is not put to the rapid progress of prophaneness and irreligion.

That

That the mass of the people can never be brought to have a proper sense of their duty to God and their neighbour, until they shall see in their superiors more attention paid to religion in general, and particularly, by a more constant and zealous attendance on *public* divine worship.

That *certain* parts in the public service and doctrine of our church (though acknowledged, by every clergyman of learning and candor, to be ill-founded and unscriptural) are still left in use, and required to be observed.

That the church loses the credit, and the nation the advantage, that would arise from the example of a very large number of persons of the best character and purest principles of religion, who are restrained by their consciences from joining in our public worship, and on

no other account than, because these points, which no man of sense or learning can maintain, do remain as a necessary part of that service.

That the *negative* example of so many highly-respected persons in every part of the kingdom has more extensive influence on the minds of their inferiors, than, at first, will be conceived; and, therefore, ought to be duly considered.

That the alterations required are inherent and consonant to the true principles of the Church of England, and to the religion of a Christian Protestant.

That alterations have frequently taken place in our liturgy, forms, &c. since the Reformation.

That nothing but the *disusage*, during a whole century, in revising our articles, liturgy, &c. has led the uninformed  
to

to receive such a proposal as a *novel* one.

That this false notion, by gaining ground every day, is alarming to our religious liberty, and threatens to place our church but one step above Popery.

That, as it takes away from the credit of the Established Church, so does it add strength to every sect within the kingdom, and much assists the cause of infidelity and irreligion.

The slightest observation must point out to every one, that the increase of profaneness and irreligion has been very great within these twenty last years. From this source, undoubtedly, do flow all those vices and crimes, of every description, become now so general among the people. We all agree in this fact ; we feel and lament the effects of this national calamity ; and every individual,  
according



according as his situation makes him more or less liable to the sad consequences, proportionably dreads them.

A variety of circumstances has probably concurred to effect this change in our morals : without searching for other additional causes (though many might be found), the vast opulence of private persons, and the means by which, in many instances, that property has been acquired, together with the use made of these *imported* treasures, do, and have led on, to that course of dissipation and luxury, which, of themselves, without the help of their concomitant vices, would leave little leisure, and less inclination, for a religious thought. That every part of this southern division of Great Britain has regularly stretched forward to a state of indifference for every thing serious and sacred, not to say to infidelity itself, one may venture to assert ; and the only distinction to be  
made

made is, that the districts throughout the country approach to, or are most distant from, the follies and vices of the capital, just as they have the means and opportunities of following the example. It is not wonderful that the lower ranks have caught an infection, which, of all others, is the most contagious: and, natural as this consequence will appear to every one, yet they, who have most studied the characters and manners of nations, will be the first to acknowledge that, in no country, at no time, the bad example of superiors has operated so rapidly, and so generally, through every class of the people, as it has done here of late; and that rank and character seldom now meet with a suitable distinction, even when it is their due; so much is every thing confounded.

The executive power of government has shewn, by many tokens, that his Majesty's  
Ministers

Ministers are not unapprized of our situation in this respect, and they have appeared desirous to offer some remedy.—Laws have been passed, it is true, and hopes were entertained, that, through these, the daring hand of the robber might be restrained, at least, from lengths which bore down all security and peace. But the experience of every day clearly shews, that such unheard-of practices are not to be stopped by the dread of any punishment on earth. To further these good intentions, his Majesty has been advised to issue his royal proclamation, calling on every magistrate to enforce those laws that could restrain such an excess of immorality and vice. These injunctions have been re-echoed from almost every county: and yet, who is there sanguine enough to expect much efficacy from these measures, which, in ordinary times, may have been thought, and found to be,

powerful



powerful remedies ? But, alas ! the first of these measures has only pushed on the fellow, whose extravagance, by being habitual, is also become necessary to him, to devise new modes to carry on his iniquitous practices : and who is there that does not see that the latter measure must be totally frustrated, while the gentry are universally, I may almost say, guilty of every excess, for which the proclamation calls on them to punish their inferiors ?

Other ground must then be explored, and other means must be devised : for irreligion and prophaneness must be fairly met and corrected, if you mean, in earnest, to amend the manners of the times.—The common people must be brought to see, in their superiors, a more general attachment to religion, and to the service of the church, before you can expect any alteration to take place in their morals.—The very mention

of such an idea subjects me, I am aware, to the derision of many; but, if they could be brought to see that one grand stumbling-block, easy to be removed, is really the chief impediment, they will not consider me, perhaps, as quite so much chimerically inclined. The removal of *a few* offensive matters in our service, and which cannot be supported by any one, on the true grounds on which Protestantism is built, and which, in fact, are now given up in the minds of every clergyman, as well as layman, who, without prejudice, has considered them, is, in the first instance, obviously necessary: for, by the wit and raillery of every infidel levelled against these (though no part of the real Christian Faith), half of the fine world have been blindly led into an unbelief of the contents of the scriptures. And, though I cannot say much in favor of numberless others, who plainly make use of these same  
 flaws

flaws in our church-service as a mere pretext to cover their own backwardness towards an attendance on the public worship ; yet I must wish, in a civil light, for their presence and example to be added ; not even despairing, that many among those gentry would, by degrees, cordially become reconciled to religious thoughts. These hopes may appear visionary to many persons ; I protest that they are otherwise in my eyes : and I am confident that the religion of the country, cleared once from objections of this nature, would directly insinuate itself into most places where it now meets only with flight or derision. But the great effect which I expect from this salutary measure, is to proceed from persons of a very different stamp. Let these same obstacles be removed, a number (much greater than the clergy suspect) of persons, whose private lives are as exemplary, as their cha-

racters stand respected among their neighbours, will instantly accord with the public service of the church, to which their inclinations strongly carry them, but from which their consciences keep them, at this moment, in a manner separated.

Need I state to any reflecting mind the benefit that the whole community would derive from the weight of the example of men of this description? or to what a degree inferences drawn from the conduct of such respectable persons, in withdrawing themselves, as they now do, must be unfavourable to the general cause of religion?

What the plan may be of this new association of most respectable names, towards promoting the cause of religion and morality, I know not: but, if these gentlemen propose to confine it merely to a subscription, in order to encourage informations against some wretched breakers of the laws,  
instead

instead of going to the root of the evil, I will venture to foretell that their union will damp the expectations of the sober part of mankind, and will have the same end, as all the former well-intentioned schemes.

Success can attend no plan which is not founded on truth, and on the genuine principles of Protestantism: although one archbishop, and many bishops, have honoured the list, I will beg leave to say, that something more than preaching, threatening, and common persuasion, must be done to reach so desirable an object. If irreligion and indifference, perhaps a contempt for every thing sacred, are to be overcome, it must be by the most striking and evident proofs of a contrary disposition in the better part of the community. I will go farther; and will even venture to pronounce, that no such proofs can possibly be expected, or obtained, unless we are ready to probe our defects

defects to the bottom, with a firm resolution to cut out those gangrenous parts which prevent a wholesome state, and cause the debility of the whole frame: without this, we shall be giving up the cause to a general infidelity, and deliver the Established Church, indeed, in fetters to posterity.

One hundred and thirty years are now almost passed, since our liturgy underwent such a review, as to have received any amendment: for, from the date of the act of uniformity in 1661, the common prayer was settled as we now have it. From the Reformation, to the year just mentioned, is a period of about 125 years; wherein alterations had been very frequent; I think, not less than eight times; and to satisfy those who, from the want of opportunity for information, at first may be staggered at any idea of innovation, even the smallest, in religious concerns, I will desire to refer them



them to the first words of the preface to every Common Prayer book, where they will see this principle plainly laid down. “ It has been the wisdom of the Church of “ England, ever since the first compiling of “ her public liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much *stiffness* in refusing, and of too much *easiness* in admitting any *variation* from it.” And lower down : “ The particular forms of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and *alterable*, and so acknowledged, &c.” It will, from thence, be clear, I hope, to every one, that such a review is not only *allowable*, but perfectly consistent, and, indeed, requisite to the principles of our religion; and, as I trust I shall shew, at no time so necessary to be called for, as at this present moment.

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If it is then clearly admitted that alterations are not only *allowable*, but *did* frequently and constantly take place in our liturgy during the first 125 years that followed the Reformation, it will be expected that, in the next place, I should proceed to state the grounds, on which I conceive the necessity of a further review of our book of Common Prayer, *in particular*, to be founded. In doing which, I foresee that many citations must be repeated, and indeed the very ground trod over again, that others have pursued, whose ill success must not (as it cannot) be ascribed to any failure of conviction from their arguments; for every candid person owns, that these were not to be refuted; and that the disappointment, those worthy persons met with, is to be ascribed to other causes; not to the persuasion that their application for reform and relief was ill-founded; but to notions of propriety



propriety and prudential considerations; which were then earnestly and effectually propagated and received; and which, we must think, can never again have the same weight on the minds of the nation. I shall, therefore, have no scruple of laying before you opinions, already often brought into public view: because, if I was to exclude these from my argument, the cause would be stripped of the support and names of some of the most learned, wise, and excellent men that this country ever produced; or it would be necessary to refer the reader to works and tracts, which to many are not known, to others, may not be at hand. —The bad success of former endeavours for reform does not hang out any sign, by which we should be dismayed from repeating perpetually, as opportunity offers, so laudable an attempt.

Neither presumption, nor vanity, has

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urged

urged me on to this undertaking, but a firm conviction alone that no plan, which does not include this object, will ever redeem this nation from the load of prophaneness and irreligion, under which we now labour. The ground is sound, and capable of being maintained against every fair attack; and the time must come (if it is not now at hand) when the cause of truth will prevail in an enlightened age, in spite of every obstacle. My excuse then, and my hopes also, shall rest on that admirable *axiom*, the sagacious Roman historian, with so much propriety, puts into the mouth of Fabius Maximus, “*Veritatem laborare nimis sæpe, aiunt, extinguere nunquam.*”

It will be right to have in our recollection, that the liturgy holds the present form from the last alteration and settling in 1661, just as the crown was restored to Charles II. and the church re-established, and after that

that every civil and ecclesiastical power and authority had passed successively through the hands of the church, the presbyterian and the puritan parties. The minds of men, though worn down with the wretched unsettled state of the country, and gladly falling into the measure of the restoration, were yet too sore, and too much divided on religious principles, to venture, at such a moment, to allow the time necessary for a full investigation of the subject. Uniformity was to be obtained, and to be decreed; and it was but natural to conclude that the prevalent party would not be inclined to open a door to concession, even on reasonable and evident ground.

Whoever is versed at all in the history and transactions of that most turbulent period, will recollect, that every distinct branch of the state was then, separately, to undergo a fresh modelling; that, at no time, the am-

bition, anxieties, and intrigues of individuals were ever known to be more on the stretch ; and that, added to these, the hearts of all men were in action, in order to protect a threatened or an accused friend, or to be revenged on an humbled enemy.

After reflecting on this distracted state of the country, will any man be bold enough to advance, that such a moment was the proper one to fix those principles, by which the faith and worship of posterity was *finally* to be bound? It is impossible; and, if any man did carry his prejudices to a length so absurd, it would be easy to produce the authorities of the persons themselves, concerned in the business, declaring the very contrary.

Under such circumstances, next to the infatuation which has attached us so servilely since to their decisions, nothing is so wonderful, as that the liturgy should have been  
produced

produced with so few defects, as we find in it. But even, if the times had admitted a candid and temperate discussion of the points, which have, from that time to this, given such just offence, the present age has advantages, which a former one could not have; this matter having been canvassed and searched into, during the last hundred years, in a manner that never had happened before; and we have a collection of materials on the subject, drawn out by the labours of some of the most learned men that ever lived in this, or any other country; and which are calculated, to enable every man to understand for himself, if he could be prevailed on to examine the ground there is for insisting on these amendments.

The bishops and others, concerned in the revival of 1661, it is evident, did little imagine that their publication was to become  
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the fixt standard for the faith and worship of future generations. The experience of past times declared to them, that all inaccuracies or mistakes were liable and open to the correction of those who succeeded them: and it is but justice to their memory, to give this construction to their well-meant endeavours, to restore an establishment in the church, the best, perhaps, the times would admit. Far was it from their thoughts to conceive, that they were assuming the part of *infallible* deciders in matters of faith; or that their successors would have the supineness, to consider themselves *irrevocably* tied to their decrees, in spite of every possible demonstration of error, even if parts were found to be in contradiction to the whole tenor of the sacred writings.

Sancroft, who, I believe, was then only chaplain to the bishop of Durham, was one of the revisers. In 1677 he became at once  
archbishop



archbishop of Canterbury : conscious of the imperfections of our liturgy, &c. he stands the foremost, as projecting a plan, by which that, together with the articles, &c. might be brought under a proper review, and be fairly examined. This excellent prelate gave at least this early testimony, that he, who had borne, in 1661, a part in framing them, never considered these matters as *finally* concluded. He went farther : for he made public his opinion, by circulating his directions thereupon to the bishops and clergy of his province ; his last act, I believe, as metropolitan.

In justly lamenting, that this venerable person could not join with the firm friends of the constitution after the Revolution, let us ever pay that tribute to his memory, which is due from a grateful nation, not unmindful of the glorious stand this virtuous prelate made, against the arbitrary efforts of king  
James ;

James ; ever remembering, that this prelate was at the head of those bishops, whose commitment to the Tower contributed so much towards the blessings we now enjoy. On this occasion, we may draw this fair conclusion ; that the same conscientiousness, which induced him to forego all worldly advantages, is the most striking proof of the sincerity of his heart.

That which Sancroft had not the opportunity of bringing forward, was warmly espoused by his successor (then only Dean) Tillotson. However, from his recommendation to king William, a commission was issued to ten bishops, and twenty divines, to prepare such matters as required amendment, for the consideration of the convocation. Two bishops, and two divines, dissatisfied at the first meeting, left their brethren, who proceeded *unanimously and without any heat* (as the best accounts inform



form us), to determine on the points, which they should propose to the houses of convocation, for amendment. More than twenty of these are handed down to us, and each particular article, when agreed to, was signed by bishop Compton, of London.

Thus it is evident, that these great ecclesiastical authorities perfectly agreed with the former metropolitan, both in the lawfulness, and the expediency of the measure.

This salutary attempt became abortive from other circumstances : party-spirit had too much effect on the temper of the times ; private intrigues and jealousies joined also, with so much efficacy, to thwart the plan, that the Lower House would not hear mention of *any* alteration whatever ; and their prolocutor, in triumph, concluded his speech with the expression to be admired from the mouth of an old English baron ; consistent, perhaps, with the declaration of

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a conclave,

a conclave, when matters of faith and worship are *there* in agitation ; but ill suited, to the greatest degree, on such an occasion, to the character of a Protestant divine, “ *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*”

The prolocutor's *veto* has hitherto proved triumphant ; and we have too much reason to apprehend, that, on one pretence or other, these laws, binding the consciences of men, will soon become, in effect, as unalterable as those of the Medes and Persians ever were : though probably, in these days, few will venture to hold a doctrine so thoroughly repugnant' to all religious liberty. Such, however, was the fate of this attempt to render the service of the Established Church as pure as possible, and to clear away those parts, which, from that day to the present, continue to offend so many respectable and conscientious persons. Considering the characters and abilities of those who undertook  
the

the task, it can never be sufficiently lamented, that their endeavours proved so unsuccessful. For archbishop Wake, speaking of them before the Lords, while he was bishop of Lincoln, thus expresses himself :  
 “ They were a set of men, than which, this  
 “ church was never, at any one time, blessed  
 “ with either wiser or better, since it was  
 “ a church ; and a design that, I am persuaded,  
 “ would have been for the *interest*  
 “ and *peace* of our *church* and *state* had it  
 “ been accomplished.” And when we find among them names, whose memory we revere, Compton, Lloyd, Burnet, among the bishops ; with Stillingfleet, Patrick, Tillotson, Sharp, Tenison, &c. among the others, it is clear, that posterity has confirmed the testimony of this learned and sagacious prelate, and regrets the more the loss of their beneficent intentions,

Thus we see that four successive archbishops of Canterbury, Sancroft, Tillotson, Tenison, and Wake, all fostered the design, and gave their weighty testimony, as well to the legality, as to the expediency ; perhaps, I should not exceed the mark, if I added, also, to the necessity of such a measure.

Though the matter does not need the addition of any further opinions of high authority, I should be blameable if I omitted the following: Bishop Stillingfleet, so eminent for his learning, says, “ that forms  
 “ of divine worship, of all things, certainly  
 “ should be so composed, as to be the least  
 “ subject to *any scruple* from any persons  
 “ whatsoever ; being on purpose composed  
 “ for the declaring men’s unity and consent  
 “ in their public worship.” And he says also, “ That, was a *review* made by wise  
 “ and

“ and peaceable men, not given to wrath  
 “ and disputing, it might be so far from  
 “ being a dishonour to this church, that it  
 “ may *add to the glory* of it.”

Bishop Gibson, eminent both as states-  
 man and prelate, joins his voice to the same  
 opinions, in these words: “ Give me leave  
 “ to add, that the uniformity, which is  
 “ here represented, as the surest foundation  
 “ of safety to the state, is the same that  
 “ was enforced, as the best means of en-  
 “ larging and strengthening the church, by  
 “ no less authority than archbishop San-  
 “ croft; and this, not in an *hasty* and *pri-*  
 “ *vate* manner, but upon the most *mature*  
 “ deliberation, and among the articles of  
 “ direction solemnly transmitted to the  
 “ bishops and clergy of his province, in  
 “ 1688.”

In later times, though other authorities  
 are not wanting, I cannot leave Dr. Clarke  
 unnoticed.

unnoticed. “ Few men” (I do agree with a  
 reverend and much respected gentleman)  
 “ have, by their writings, cast more lights  
 “ on the dark parts of the word of God, or  
 “ more laboured to restore his true worship,  
 “ than Dr. Clarke, rector of St. James’s,  
 “ Westminster.” His peculiar talents for  
 exact criticism, his profound knowledge in  
 the learned languages, rendered him so fit for  
 the meritorious work he undertook, that  
 his testimony cannot be omitted ; as it is  
 so well known, that the zealous object of  
 his whole life was directed, to bring our  
 faith and worship to be cleared from all ex-  
 pressions, doctrines, and declarations not  
 founded on scripture. And, though this  
 respectable person had not the satisfaction  
 of seeing his labours crowned with success,  
 yet, I am persuaded, that the alterations he  
 aimed at, under the will of God, will sooner  
 or later be attained ; and that his works,  
 particularly



particularly that excellent one, on the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, will lead, in a great measure, to effect that end.

Neither my situation, nor the sense I have of the little knowledge I possess, will allow me to enter into a discussion on the different objectionable parts of our liturgy, &c. But, as the Creed, under the name of Athanasius, has given more offence, and for a longer time, than any other part of our service; not because it appears there under a feigned name, but as it holds forth doctrines derogatory to the honour of God, a *merciful* and all-powerful Creator; I must still beg leave to mention the thoughts of some of our ablest divines on this subject.

This creed is now acknowledged by all to have been written by Vigilius Tapfenfis, about the year 500, and never to have found admission into the Romish church (from whence we have it) till about the year 1000.

Chilling-

Chillingworth, in his Letter to Dr. Sheldon, afterwards archbishop, speaks thus concerning it: “ That the damning sentences in St. Athanasius’s creed (as we are made to subscribe to it) are false; and also, in a high degree, presumptuous and schismatical.” “ And, indeed,” says the orthodox Bishop Taylor, “ it seems to me very hard, to put uncharitableness into the creed, and so to make it become, as an article of faith; though, perhaps, this very thing was no faith of Athanasius :” and it is now sufficiently proved, that, so far from being the faith of Athanasius, it is received as a deception of a much later date, to which the high authority of his name gave sanction. In this light was it stated by Burnet to Archbishop Tillotson, in 1694; who, in answer, says, “ That the account given of Athanasius’s creed, seems to me no way satisfactory : I wish

“ we



“ we were well rid of it.” And since their time, this suggestion concerning that creed has been demonstrated, to the conviction of every one who has duly considered the subject.

If no other circumstance could be alleged, this alone would be sufficient to call loudly for a review : for the proof of one imposition hurts any cause ; and even, where there is no suspicion, many will naturally arise. Nor is it astonishing, that, under the evidence of a matter of this importance left uncorrected, a deception, on which the article of faith is rested, such numbers, as I well know there are, should be driven from the public worship, on that account. If it was left to the option of the minister to use it, or not, the matter might still bear some shadow of defence : for, in that case, I am confident no one, but the illiterate, or the wrong-headed, would think

of reading it; by which means this creed would soon sink into general oblivion. But this is not the case; and on certain days, the minister officiating is bound, by his oath, to read it. And what does he read? Why, a part of the service, which every clergyman, of the least knowledge or judgment, must know to be repugnant to the sacred word of God. And I would desire to appeal to no other tribunal, for a decision on this point, than to the breast of every candid and enlightened clergyman, who would lay his hand on his heart, and fairly speak out the dictates of his conscience.

While a matter of faith stands thus, as a part of our Liturgy; which, under one of the articles, not only every clergyman is obliged to subscribe, but every young man also, standing for his first degree; and, at Oxford, every youth, even at first entrance there from school, is compelled to sign; I  
will

will leave the candid part of the world to judge, whether it will be possible to convince the thinking part of mankind, that churchmen are shewing an earnest interest in the cause of the pure Christian faith, and of that worship, which is alone reconcilable to the true spirit of Protestantism? In endeavouring to state to those who may not have had leisure, disposition, or opportunity, to search into the business themselves, that alterations, from time to time, have taken place in our Liturgies, &c. and that the opinions of the greatest churchmen, for more than a century, have testified the necessity and expediency of a wise and temperate revival, I must to some degree have proved, that such a review was, at this instant of time, more requisite than ever, which was to be the last object of these few sheets: For, when once it is admitted, that our Liturgy, &c. is defective on matters of faith,

or worship, and that amendments are *justly* called for, and can *legally* take place, to remedy the evil, I conceive that nobody can justify the deferring one day the steps, which ought to be taken, to forward a purpose of so serious and beneficent a nature. If any one will prove to me, that any future particular time will have, or is likely to have, advantages, that the present day has not, I assuredly shall desist, and wait, though impatiently, with the hopes of seeing the good work effected. But who is there bold enough to answer for future national events? He is a presumptuous man, who dares put off till to-morrow that which is material to his own or his family's concerns: but the man is much more so, who dares postpone, but for an hour, under expectations like these, that which may bring nearer to God, himself, his fellow-citizens, or perhaps that flock, committed to his charge.

charge. But if no such argument can be brought, and, in the nature of things, none can; I will venture to say, that peculiar circumstances do favour the present situation of this country, and singularly adapt the day to produce this inestimable blessing to the community. The two great parties which divide the country, may be represented as contending for the approbation and support of the public, on the display of their abilities, rather than on separate opinions relative to political principles: their opposition to each other rests on personal more than on public ground: and I may venture to advance, that there is no jealousy between the leaders more strong, than the ambition of appearing to approach, nearer than his rival, to the principles of the Revolution; principles, which lead to an extensive toleration, to religious as well as civil liberty, and which can never allow our faith and worship to be bound



bound down, without redress, by the fallible decisions of men. We may therefore say, that, in consistence with their own principles, the chiefs must and will look towards religious liberty, and every thing tending soundly to maintain that line, with favourable attention.

Moreover, a true sense of the late signal and merciful interposition of Divine Providence in our favor has sunk deep into the hearts of all his Majesty's liege subjects; and our Sovereign is no less gratefully acknowledging the hand of the Almighty, whose bountiful goodness has exceeded the utmost of our hopes. Must we not wish that a moment, so suited to promote a religious disposition, will be seized by king and people to make the best return we are able for such mercies? And can this be better fulfilled, in the true spirit of the Christian religion, than by concurring, with temper and moderation,



moderation, to bring the public worship of the national church to be as pure and perfect as the joint endeavours of the most pious and learned among the clergy can render it? And let us hope, that no bigotted tongue may ever succeed to persuade his Majesty, that the *hasty* settlement, made in 1661, can be maintained in these days, without giving up the credit, and sound principles, on which the Church of England ought to stand, and actually is founded.

*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,  
Tempus eget.*

The circumstances which defeated the last applications, so far from discouraging, ought to promote the undertaking now, when the true causes come to be considered, which overthrew the attempts made in 1773.

The late archbishop stands in no need of any praise of mine; for, wherever his name  
went,

went, there likewise were known his candor, honor, mildness of temper, generosity, and liberality of mind. Yet we have another archbishop (of Canterbury, I mean), whose character for wisdom and moderation, together with his knowledge of the world, intitle him so well to preside over, and set the example of that fairness and temper of mind, without which a work of this nature can never be accomplished. To assist the archbishop herein, we must rejoice also in seeing bishops, whose learning, piety, and abilities, are equal to those of any who have filled their lordships bench; some we see, likewise, who are pledged to the public, by their former applications on the subject, and have borne witness to the necessity of the measure, and therefore must be considered as committed, in every sense, to bring it forward: if the names of those who did apply, 16 years since, for such a revival, are

accurately

accurately handed down, we may flatter ourselves with well-founded expectations of success, from the influence of bishop Yorke of Ely, bishop Porteus of London, and bishop Ross of Exeter. These right reverend prelates will feel, that it is a debt due to their fellow subjects, and that must be required of them: and their characters stand too high, to allow the world to doubt, one moment, of the sincerity of their former professions.

Among other reasons, the following were the principal, which induced many persons to be against the last attempt for a review, &c. though, at the same time, they wished to see all demonstrated errors rectified; and did certainly coincide with the petitioners, as far as the necessity of a revision.—It was industriously propagated by the court party, that the petition from the Feathers Tavern was set on foot by faction; and the memory

of the baneful effects of tumults was too present to the minds of the majority in the House, to suppose that argument would not have its full force : to that carried to the archbishops, I think, by Dr. Wollaston, and which bore the appearance of more temper and propriety, still it was answered, that this was not without an imputation of censure on his grace, and his suffragan bishops, whose principle, and whose desire were, to give every possible ease to all well-grounded scruples of the clergy, and of the people ; but that it would have been brought on more properly, and might expect to be received by mankind with more cordial effect, if such a plan had originated from the right reverend bench.

One circumstance I well remember, and cannot avoid laying the greatest stress on it, knowing the influence this had on so many, as well as on myself, which is, that the  
 persons,

persons, most concerned in the consideration of the business, had received the fullest expectation, and had communicated them to others, uncontradicted, that the bishops themselves would take the matter under consideration, hoping to bring about the object desired in that manner which should be thought the most judicious, in a religious and civil view. The American, French, Spanish, and Dutch wars soon followed; and no blame can lie any where, if business of this nature was not then agitated. Peace is now fully restored; trade and all the attendant blessings have, thank God! followed: besides, the present appearance of the domestic troubles of our neighbours seems to indicate the propriety of applying *now* to this wholesome work of Peace. If I presume to observe, that six years are now elapsed since the termination of the war, I beseech the right reverend lords not to

consider me as doubting their intentions to fulfil our just expectations, but solely to remind them of the circumstance, and humbly to represent to them, that the nation have a right to demand, from their lordships, some activity, some proofs of a sincere disposition of reconciling, as far as may be, all good men to the communion of the established church; and thereon, of furnishing the grand and sole instrument, by which infidelity can be effectually curbed. Bigotry, and its fellow-traveller ignorance, do, while they last in every country, rivet the minds of the people strangely to certain things; but when the light of learning enters, if all matters of worship, and of faith particularly, which scripture does not warrant, are not removed away as fast, the consequence will be certain. These errors once discovered, and proved to be such, will bring an imputation of Priestcraft on the

the



the clergy, and drive off multitudes into infidelity. So much prejudice and injury any unsound parts of public divine service bring on the rest : even, when these last are able to stand the test of the most searching eye. How soon would every unfair insinuation at once be silenced, now too frequently dropped, as if mankind considered their lordships to be too much attached to their temporal, and too little attentive to their spiritual concerns, on the instant it shall be known, that the bishops have applied to the king, in order that a revisal, under his royal authority, might be committed to them and others to prepare ! The salutary work has been too long delayed ; considered both in a religious and civil light. The reasoning of flimsy Politicians has hitherto prevailed : if left to them, dangerous corruptions, by not being inquired into, will

will get to be fast-rooted ; for, according to their notion, it will *never* be thought the *proper* time to examine and correct them. Let any one consider the tendency and effect of such arguments : do they not go to bind us down to admit, as infallible, the line of faith and worship hastily fixed at the Restoration ; and to give up that civil right of every Protestant, and of the Church of England, in particular, to call for a correction of faults, when any such appear ? The effect is too much felt already : from the long neglect, half the nation do not know, that legally they may, and many know as little, that they are called upon, constitutionally, to require a revival : for I maintain, that it is giving up the true principles of religious liberty (whatever may be the quarter from whence the stop arises), if our liturgy, articles, &c. do not, from  
time

time to time, pass under a formal examination, even if nothing should be found alterable therein.

What corruptions are crept into various parts of the divine books, the researches of the learned make daily appear; and these same corruptions, by inattention, are obtaining every day authority, and will be infinitely more difficult to be removed. What stronger instance can be brought in proof, than that famous text, 1 John, v. 7, 8, so much and eagerly contended for?

This text has been long given up by those who have been most esteemed for their learning: nay, in the early days of the Reformation, the *suspicious* words were printed in our English bibles with a different type; purposely to put the reader upon his guard, and to mark it as a doubtful passage. The following words [*in heaven; the Father,*

*ther, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth]* were originally so printed; and are now clearly proved to be an interpolation. Dr. Bentley, following Sir Isaac Newton, readily disclaimed them in his famous lecture, when he stood for the divinity professorship at Cambridge; and indeed proved them so satisfactorily to be spurious, that Dr. Waterland, the strenuous advocate for that part of the church doctrine, which these words are so well calculated to support, was obliged to acknowledge, that he had been convinced himself, before he heard Bentley's proof.

However, in all the Bibles now printed, this passage stands without any distinguishing mark, notwithstanding this discovery, and how much it is liable to lead the people into the greatest mistakes. And who will  
say,

say, that numberless persons do not found a principal article of their faith on this very expression?

The mistakes are infinite, which might be brought to prove the necessity of a new translation of the Bible: and, indeed, the people having a right to read the Bible in their own language, it is really criminal to give it otherwise, than under as pure and perfect a version as the labours of the learned can render it. However, till this does take place, surely, it is the duty of every minister of the Gospel, who is qualified, to warn his congregation, from the pulpit, against a reliance on those suspected texts which may lead them, unapprized, into error. The fruitful researches of Dr. Kennicot, patronized by his Majesty, will little answer the king's gracious intentions, or the expectation of the public, if they are not made use of directly in perfecting a new

version of the Bible. One learned gentleman (Dr. Campbell) has favored the public this spring with a new version of the Gospels; and the expediency demonstrated by another (Dr. Symonds) in his admirable Critical Observations on our present Version of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, added to that which we have received, and have further to expect, on the same line of study, from Dr. Macknight and others, prove that private persons are zealously contributing their separate labors, hoping that those in authority will turn them legally to the advantage of the community.

Thus have I endeavoured to bring into a small compass these Hints to an associated set of nobility and gentry, who, I am persuaded, mean the good of their fellow-subjects; and, in consequence, the honor and prosperity of the nation. A matter of this importance, I shall be justly told, ought to have



have been treated in a manner much less superficial: but I leave that to abler hands; and these will not be wanting, if the main design be approved. My immediate purpose will be fully answered, if I can again bring the business forward this day to the serious consideration of these lords and gentlemen; hoping, in consequence, that they may use their influence with those in authority, and thereby promote this essential service.

If, in doing this, I can be preparing the minds of people earnestly to expect, and with gratitude to receive the boon, when it is offered by their superiors, it will be my best reward. There is but one method, I conceive, by which the Church of England can effectually maintain its ground against the different and surrounding dissenting sects: and that is, by getting rid of any point of faith and worship, when, on fair

and full examination, such shall have been found militating against the words or spirit of scripture.

An established church proceeding on this system, and it is the genuine principle of every Protestant church, would bring back thousands to the public worship, and would then effect every good purpose, which was the object of these Hints, by the weight, authority, and example of its ministers.

Under the description of *irreligious*, I have supposed, in this short treatise, every person to be comprehended, who does not give demonstrative proof of his attachment to religion, by attendance on some public worship, either of the Established Church, or of some other. Many worthy persons, and devout ones too, will come of course among this number, and form, I trust, no inconsiderable part. Still, in a civil light, they are not quite strictly clear of the denomination;

mination; as the state derives no benefit from their example on this head: and on the contrary the Established Church feels the loss of such persons the more, as their moral characters lead their neighbours naturally to conceive, that the duty is not so requisite, which these persons venture to omit. On the other hand, although the dissolute clergyman, who is too often seen, cannot be brought within this description, yet such a character is not less the reproach and contempt of society: yet I question, on the whole, whether the positive bad example of the latter prejudices the interest of the church so much, as the negative conduct of the former.

It may be the proper subject for a separate essay, to point out the mistaken policy of any minister, who trusts, that able and learned clergymen (but whose notions are inimical to a comprehension), preferred and  
brought

brought forward under the patronage of the crown, will be able to support ecclesiastical affairs against all inquiry, alteration, or correction *whatever*. Cool reflection and information would soon convince this politician, that such expectations are vain; for it will become evident, that the persuasion of the defects, in the articles of faith and worship, has now gained ground to a degree so great, as will occasion (if such a wretched plan of governing continues) a conflict at last, to obtain the necessary amendments which, on this day, if conducted with judgment, would call for none, meet with little or no opposition, and, in fact, give the most effectual support and credit to the church established.

It appears to me, lastly, that, after the *disusage* of inquiry and revival for a century, no distinction ought to be made now between procrastinating the business, and a  
plan

plan formed of putting a total stop, in future, to all reform whatever, by the means of this evasive conduct.

Religious liberty is already endangered greatly by the success, which has so long attended this insidious system. If others were as much alarmed at the inevitable consequences, as I am, they would see, that by shaking off the tyranny of the Pope, at the Reformation, they are now falling fast under subjection to the *uncontrovertible* opinions of a number of still *fallible* men, and that they are departing more and more every day from the true principles of Christian Protestants.

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#### P O S T S C R I P T.

THE scruples of a country curate, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for *January 1737*, are so just and well-founded, that I need make no apology for reprinting them

them *here*. They relate chiefly to the offices of baptism, and the burial of the dead; and add greatly to all the other arguments, for the necessity of a review of our public liturgy. This honest curate's scruples may likewise find more acceptance with some, as it does not appear, that he is scandalized at any matter of faith. However, the principal instances, produced by him, lie within the reach of the meanest understanding, and whenever they fall out (and at baptism they constantly must), it is impossible, that the congregation can retire with the reverence for the church service, and the ministers of it, which the nature of such solemn forms ought to excite: otherwise they are defective, indeed. But if these forms, in any part, tend not only to take off the respect we should have for all solemn religious rites, but contain, besides, matters so very glaring and preposterous, as to lead the people to think,



think, that we are trifling, as this author states, with *God* and *man*, every one must then be sensible, that a continuation of such services can only be an encouragement to irreligion, infidelity, and, indeed, lead to a very unfavourable opinion of the designs of the *superior clergy*, and of the manner in which their duty is discharged.

While these things remain uncorrected, they are operating against the cause, which the association wishes to espouse, and will render vain every effort to bring back the nation to a true sense of religion and morality.

*Some Observations on the Church Liturgy, or  
the Scruples of a Country CURATE.*

S I R,

I HAVE often wondered, why *another* public *Review* of the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England* (which has been so *earnestly wished for* by a great many very pious members of our Church) has not been effectually undertaken *long ago* by proper authority. It is allowed by all rational persons, that there is *need enough* of *amendment* in several parts of the *Common Prayer Book*: Nor can it well be otherwise, since a course of above seventy-five years (which have passed since the *last Review*) must needs have produced a great many *obsolete* words and phrases at least, and perhaps given us *better light* into several passages of *scripture*, on  
which

which some parts of our *Liturgy* were founded.

I am satisfied, that no one can read the book of *Common Prayer* with attention and impartiality, but must observe *several* things in it, that *may be altered* for the better : And why we should not have it as free from *imperfections* as may be, I know of no *sufficient reason* ; unless a few wretched *political* motives, which I have sometimes heard of, should be thought *sufficient* to justify such a neglect. If it was thought *necessary*, in the year 1689 (almost *half a century* ago), to undertake a general *Review* of the *Common Prayer Book* ; I am sure, that the *same necessity* still subsists ; and, I believe, will be thought by most people to be *now* somewhat *stronger*.

It may be, that the chief motive at that time for *altering* the *Liturgy* was in order to recommend it the better to our *dissenting*

*brethren* : The reason, without doubt, was very good, and worthy of true Christians ; and if an *alteration* was *now* to be undertaken for the *same reason*, I know of nobody that would find fault with it, but only such as Dr. *Sacheverel*, who railed so bitterly at the intended alterations in 1689.—In my opinion, the *present* may not be an *improper* time to make some *amendments* in our *Liturgy*, for the sake of the more *moderate dissenters* : For, having lately lost their hopes of seeing the *Test Act* repealed, I am persuaded, that a great many among them would constantly communicate with the *Church of England*, if a few things in her *Liturgy*, that are in their own *nature indifferent*, were left, upon a Review, to be *indifferent* also in their *use*. And those among them, who, upon this condescension from us, would not come over to our Church, would have less pretence afterwards to complain

plain of *hardships* and *discouragements* from a *religious establishment*.

The prospect of bringing over many *Dissenters* to the *Church of England*, is *one reason* why an *improvement* of our *Liturgy* should be undertaken: But what chiefly led me to make these reflections upon the *necessity* of *improving* our *Liturgy* was a *difficulty* that I lately met with in reading the office for *Public Baptism*, which ought not, in my opinion, to be suffered any longer to perplex the consciences of honest men. Being Curate of a pretty large parish in the country, I was called upon, about six weeks ago, by some of the parish-officers to baptize twin children of a poor *travelling* woman, who, by mere accident, had been brought to bed the day before, at a publick-house in our parish. The poor woman had nobody of her own acquaintance with her, not so much as her husband; and therefore

fore the parish-officers were obliged to *hire* some of the *least conscientious* people of the parish to be *sponsors* for the children. After I had *named* the infants, and proceeded to that part of the service, which contains a solemn *exhortation* to the godfathers, I began to reflect with myself, that what I was reading was no way *suitable* to that occasion ; but, on the contrary, was highly *improper*, and in reality no better than most egregious *trifling* with *God* and *man*. The surprise I was in, upon this sudden reflection, occasioned me to make a sensible pause: For I was under great doubt, whether I ought to go on or not: But not being able to recollect that I had any *liberty* to *omit* that part of the Baptismal Office, upon *any occasion* whatsoever; I disguised my confusion as well as I could, and finished the whole service as usual. When the ceremony was over, I had then time to consider with myself

self



self more leifurely, with what *seriousness* could I *exhort* the *sponsors*; and with what *truth* or *faithfulness* could they *solemnly promise* before *God* and the *congregation* then present, that they would *teach* those children the meaning of the vow and engagement that was then made for them? That they would *call upon* them to hear *sermons*, in order to learn their baptismal covenant? that they would provide for their *instruction* in the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*; and for their *godly* and *virtuous education* in all parts of *Christian life*: I say, with what *face* could I *exhort* them, or they *promise* to do these things; when I was sure there was no *probability* of their *ever seeing* the children after they should be *one month* old? For, their mother, being kept in her lying-in at the parish expence, would be obliged to *depart* as soon as her month was up, and follow her old method of living,

by

by *travelling* about the country; or perhaps would return to her own native place, which was in the island of *Guernsey*.—I assure you, that this relation is not feigned, but an exact account, in every particular, of real matter of fact: And I do not question, but several of my brethren the Clergy have met with the like incidents.

It is well known, that the business of *sponsors at Baptism* is, in general, brought to a very scandalous pass. I have heard, that the inferior sort of people are obliged, in many places, to be at no small expence in *HIRING sponsors* for their children: And I believe, that, in all places, not one in ten choose *sponsors* with a *RELIGIOUS* view, of having their assistance in the *pious and virtuous education* of their children. Why then, in the name of God, is there not some provision made, either to *regulate* the great abuse of this ceremony, or to leave it at the  
*discretion*

*discretion* of the *parents* to observe it, or not : or else wholly to *lay it aside*, as a thing in itself *not necessary*, and known by experience to be *greatly abused*? I heartily wish, that God may put it into the hearts of those who are in *public authority*, to make some *alterations* in *this* and *other defects* of our *Common Prayer*, for the ease of *scrupulous consciences*, and for the greater decency and solemnity of *public worship*.

Since I am upon this subject, I will take the liberty of communicating to you *another scruple*, which I have often had upon my mind in reading one of the prayers of our *Liturgy* : the prayer that I mean, is that in the *Burial Office*, which immediately follows the *Lord's Prayer*. I think, there are some things mentioned in it, which are hardly true ; and others, in my opinion, very *improper*.—The prayer begins thus: *Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that*

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*depart*

*depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity.* Not to mention the manifest *tautology* in these few words, I think the *doctrine* they contain is not generally allowed to be *true*, at least it cannot be proved from *scripture*. We are assured, that *God* is in *Heaven*; and the scripture teaches us, that the *souls* of good men, departed this life, are in *Hades*; but *Heaven* and *Hades* have been always understood, I think, to be two *distinct places*; therefore the *souls of the faithful* cannot be *with God*, in the sense which seems to be meant here.

It is the general opinion of the most eminent divines of our Church, that the *souls* of good men, when they are gone out of this world, are not *with God* in any proper sense; that is, they do not enjoy what is called *the beatific vision*, or the more *immedi-*

*ate*

*ate presence* of the Divine Majesty; but are reserved in an invisible region, which the scripture calls *Hades*, until the last day of judgment; *then* to have their perfect consummation of bliss and happiness in the *glorious presence* of God for evermore.

The words immediately following the foregoing paragraph, are these: *We give thee hearty THANKS, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.* I have always looked upon this sentence highly *improper* to be used indiscriminately at the burial of *all sorts* of people in general. When it is pronounced over such persons as have died very *old*, or in great *want* and *poverty*, or in any other manifest *mifery*; it is then, in my opinion, very *suitable*. For we may, with great sincerity, *thank God* for dilivering a *poor, infirm, or wretched* creature out of those *miseries* of the world, which we

knew he plainly suffered. But to *thank God* for taking out of this world, perhaps in the *flower* of his age, a man who was bringing up a *family* in *virtuous industry*, or doing some eminent *services* to *religion* and his *country*, or any other ways employing his talents to the *glory* of *God*, and the *good* of *mankind*; I say, to *thank God* solemnly for the death of *such a man*, is what I can see no ground for, either in *reason* or *scripture*. In my opinion, it would be as well, if in *such instances* we only expressed our SUBMISSION to the wise providence of God, who had thought proper to *deprive* us of so *useful* a member of society.

The next words in the same prayer are these that follow; *befeeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom.* I am not certain what is the *exact meaning* of this passage; it appears



appears to me to set forth the doctrine of *absolute predestination* : for it seems to suppose, that there is a certain *determinate number* of persons to be saved ; and that God can *accomplish*, or make up that number *sooner* or *later*, as he pleases. Whether this be the *meaning* of this passage ; and if it be, whether it be *agreeable* to the doctrine of *scripture*, I leave to my *superiors* to determine. For my own part, I have always looked upon it as favouring of *absolute predestination* ; and, in that light, as not sufficiently supported by *scripture* ; at least, not so clear of all *doubt*, as to be fit to make a part of a solemn *petition* to *Almighty God*.

I think, it is hardly justifiable, to put any thing into a *public prayer*, which is not founded upon *clear* deductions either of *reason* or *scripture* : For *public prayers* have a much stronger sanction put upon them, than the composition of any *private man* :

And

And the *vulgar* are apt to look upon them as *next* in authority to the *scriptures* themselves; and sometimes, I am afraid, carry their opinion of them much *higher*; and the *clergy* are always obliged to make use of them *without the least variation*, though the matter of them should be generally allowed not to be *entirely consistent* with *scripture*. Whether that prayer in the *Burial Office* which I have now examined, be altogether *agreeable* to *reason* and *scripture*, I leave every one to judge for himself. I did not choose *this prayer* for the subject of my observations, because I thought it the *only one* in our Liturgy that is liable to *exceptions*; but I made choice of this, because, in my opinion, it seems in *all* its parts to be the least supported by *scripture authority* of the whole collection of *public prayers*.

I shall not trouble you at present with my thoughts upon any of the rest; but beg  
leave

leave to mention in *general*, that I think the *morning service* for *sundays* and *holidays*, as it is now read in all parish-churches, loses a great deal of its *beauty* and *decency* (to say nothing *worse*) by the custom that prevails every where of reading *together, at one and the same time*, without any *proper interval*, what was originally designed for *three distinct services*, to be used at so many *different* times. This gives occasion to that (perhaps *just*) objection of the *dissenters*, against the *frequent repetition* of the *Lord's Prayer* in our public worship : for by this ill-timed *accumulation* of *different* parts of our Liturgy, it is no uncommon thing for the *Lord's Prayer* to be repeated *six times* in the *same morning service*.

I am not conscious to myself, that, in these observations, I have any ways offended against that just *deference* which every *clergyman* owes to the judgment and authority of the *Church of England* : If any  
 one

one should think otherwise, I sincerely ask his pardon ; and do solemnly profess, that I meant no more than to propose *some* of my own scruples ; in hopes, that the venerable fathers of our Church will be persuaded in due time to do something for the relief of such *scrupulous consciences* as mine.

Kent, Sept. 20.  
1736.

*Yours,*

D. H.









